



DASD

# Framework for Moving Forward



Summary of community conversation held on August 11, 2021



On August 11, 2021, the DeForest Area School District engaged over 90 DASD stakeholders -- parents, staff, students, business, clergy civic organizations, government officials, and other community members -- in a facilitated conversation designed to reflect on and discuss this past year, to share and understand a variety of perspectives, and to find ways to move our DASD community forward positively into the new school year.

## Outcomes

### Purpose



A planning team made up of parents, students, staff, and administration helped to clarify outcomes and provide suggestions for how to accomplish the outcomes. They also assisted school district staff in identifying methods for communications and recruiting participants.

The four outcomes developed by the planning team included:

Give people a collective understanding of the 2020-21 school year (historical timeline). 4

Give participants an opportunity to reflect and to share the impact of this past year with others. 6

Share the District's plans for moving forward (what we've learned, and what practices we want to keep, change, and end). 7

Provide participants an opportunity to share their hopes and suggestions for moving forward. 8

*More about each outcome on the designated pages.*

The event took place 6-9 pm at Harvest Intermediate School

This past year our school district has learned:

- The importance of relationships
- Our students', families', and staffs' capacity for resilience and growth
- Flexibility



# Historical Timeline

## Give people a collective understanding of the 2020-21 school year (historical timeline).

Participants were asked to review a **Timeline** document prior to the August 11th event. The Timeline gave people the opportunity for a collective understanding of the 2020-21 school year (overview of events/activities, historical timeline and implications)

The Timeline was posted on the walls in chronological order in eight numbered sections (two months each). For each of the 8 timeline sections, participants were asked to

share their personal reactions to the timeline by writing questions and comments on post-it notes that were provided upon arrival. The activity allowed participants a chance to compare their reactions to others in the room.

DASD Board of Education President Jan Berg and Superintendent Eric Runez welcomed everyone to the event. Runez introduced Drew Howick, Howick Associates, as the evening's facilitator.

A brief summary of questions and comments from each timeline section was shared with the full group in attendance (see page 5).

## All Timeline Comments and Questions



Planning Team member Tyler Susee and DASD Director of Learning Information Systems Kim Bannigan develop a summary of questions and comments.

February - March 2020	Anxious; lots of communication; district was proactive; quick pivot to virtual learning and technology solutions; broadband issues in community; supportive of staff
April-June 2020	Anxiety; lots of unknowns; thankful for food service meals; lack of closure to school year; support for teachers' flexibility and focus on connections; acceptance of reality of COVID
July-August 2020	Appreciation for virtual start; focus on safety; beginning of divisiveness; positive changes made to virtual learning; acknowledge DASD staff work throughout summer; good communication
September-October 2020	Appreciation for teachers; grateful for hybrid options for K-2 and Special Education; good high school communication and synchronous worked well; concern for students struggling with virtual learning
November-December 2020	Concern about COVID spread over holidays; more changes stressful; grateful some sports could resume; safety remains priority
January-February 2021	Divisiveness increases; feeling less support for teachers/staff; phased-in hybrid approach welcome; grateful for options (hybrid/virtual); staff anxiety; emotional time
March-April 2021	Virtual option becomes more challenging for students; 4 days a week in-person welcome; frustration with Wednesdays; vaccines; appreciation for still providing virtual option
May-June 2021	Relief the year is over; sense of feeling more "normal"; gratitude for end-of-year celebrations; appreciation for continued following of safety guidance

## Glads, Sads, Mads

Give participants an opportunity to reflect and to share the impact of this past year with others.

Participants (in stakeholder groups) reflected and shared the impact of this past year and a half with others. "How did the events of the past year and a half affect you?" (pandemic, local, state, or national events/issues)

What are you GLAD about, SAD about and MAD about?

- ✓ GLAD for . . . *amazing school staff, good communication, adaptability, time with family, options for learning, student engagement, getting back to in-person at the end of the school year, keeping everyone safe, the vaccine, relationships, improved use of technology, community support*
- ✓ SAD for . . . *social aspects for kids, stress of virtual learning on families, masking, decline in mental health, isolation, community divisiveness, loss of learning, communication, lack of socialization, not seeing students in-person, mental health, missing family and friends, fear, lack of support for educators, loss of experiences, not assuming positive intentions, loss of loved ones, Zoom meetings*
- ✓ MAD for . . . *masking, virtual learning, lack of support for businesses and caregivers, missing normal school activities, juggling school-work-job, unkind behavior, change in relationships, negativity, misinformation, lack of student engagement, devalued educators, unvaccinated people, government response, politics*

### All Glads, Sads, and Mads



Each group shared their "Gladdest Glads, Saddest Sads and Maddest Mads."

## What we've learned . . . Moving forward

Share the District's plans for moving forward (what we've learned, and what practices we want to keep, change, and end).

Like other organizations, school districts have been faced with the challenge of being responsive to the rapid changes necessitated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., dynamic data, shifting policy guidance). At the end of the last school year, DASD staff took significant time reflecting on the experiences of the past year, analyzing current practices, changes needed for virtual and hybrid instruction, and making sense of what we've learned.

- 1 What district, school, and classroom practices and activities can we **change** in light of our experiences over the last year?
- 2 What practices and activities were **paused and now will resume**?
- 3 What temporary "fixes" have helped us get through this time but should **now end**?
- 4 As the pandemic provided opportunities for experimentation and change, what **innovations do we want to keep as we move into the future**?  
This also includes what has become clearer about equitable school experiences for all of our students?

➤ Plans for 2021-22: instruction, student learning, educating the whole child

### What we've learned . . . Moving forward



# Hopes & Suggestions

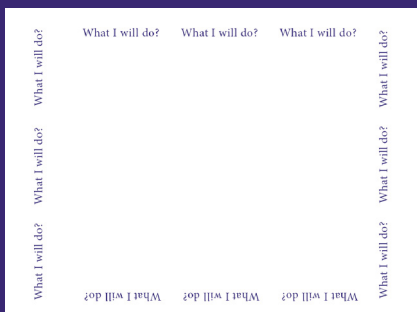
Provide participants an opportunity to share their hopes and suggestions for moving forward.

The pandemic was a challenge, but it won't be our last. We're always going to have things that people in our community disagree on. What can we do to move forward so these controversies don't become hurtful roadblocks? Participants were asked what their HOPES are for our community. And, what can be done (SUGGESTIONS) to move forward positively? In other words, how can there be more GLADS and less SADS and MADS?

District staff are reviewing the data to determine opportunities for our school district to assist.

## Hopes & Suggestions

# What will I do?



## BEFORE LEAVING . . .



Participants were asked to anonymously write a personal commitment:

~ "What I will do to contribute to my community."

or

~ "What I will do to contribute to reach more glads."

## "What will I do?" statements

### Follow-up



DASD staff and Board of Education members have reviewed all of the documented data and participant feedback to determine possible action steps for the district. Board members will reach out to various stakeholder groups throughout the 2021-22 school year to continue similar conversations. The district will consider hosting a community conversation event yearly, in addition to the 5- and 10-year [Future Search conferences](#) (currently planned for 2023 and 2028 respectively).

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